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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our helper and friend, guide our Senators this day. Help them to walk the way of surrender to Your will, guided by Your wisdom. Refresh them with Your spirit to quicken their thinking and reinforce their judgment. Show them the spiritual foundations of our heritage that they may conserve and protect them. Draw them close to You and to one another in humility and service. And, Lord, spare them from arrogating to themselves the judgments which belong to You alone.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 27, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the Children's Health Insurance Program. At about 12:30 p.m. today, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND will take the oath of office to become a Senator representing the State of New York. Following the swearing in of that Senator, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons to meet.

This week, we are going to legislate. There will be no morning business. We want to have all the time that is necessary to work on this important legislation dealing with children's health. I hope people will be ready to offer amendments. We have worked with staff on the Republican side of the aisle, and we have it set up that we have three amendments that will be laid down very quickly. By that time, we should be able to even schedule some votes for this afternoon.

I want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to offer any amendment they want to offer. What we are going to try to do is not have a bunch of them stacked up. I think that can sometimes be very troublesome. But we will work, as we proceed through the legislation, as to what amendments need to be pending. We are here to legislate. We hope that if people have concerns about this important legislation and they think it can be made better by taking something out or putting something in, that is what they should do. We want everyone, when they offer

their amendments, to have ample time to debate them, as we did with the first piece of legislation we dealt with, the Lilly Ledbetter legislation. After there has been ample time for debate, there can be motions to table. There are some Senators who may, for various reasons, agree to have up-or-down votes. We are here to legislate.

This morning is a little difficult because we have the Finance Committee meeting to complete their work on the recovery package. There are 200 amendments that have been filed in the committee, and they have to work their way through those amendments. That should take the better part of the day, at least many hours. It is estimated from 4 to 8 hours to complete the markup.

The Appropriations Committee markup is at 10:30 a.m. also. There are people from the Finance Committee who will be coming here on a rotating hour-by-hour basis so there will be floor coverage. So there is no reason not to be able to legislate and talk about this legislation in any way Senators feel is appropriate. Rollcall votes are expected to occur throughout the day. There will not be any votes before we complete our caucus luncheons.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, are we now on the bill?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill has not yet been laid down.

Mr. McCONNELL. Can I suggest we go to the bill? I was going to lay down an amendment, consistent with the majority leader's suggestion that we get started.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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